

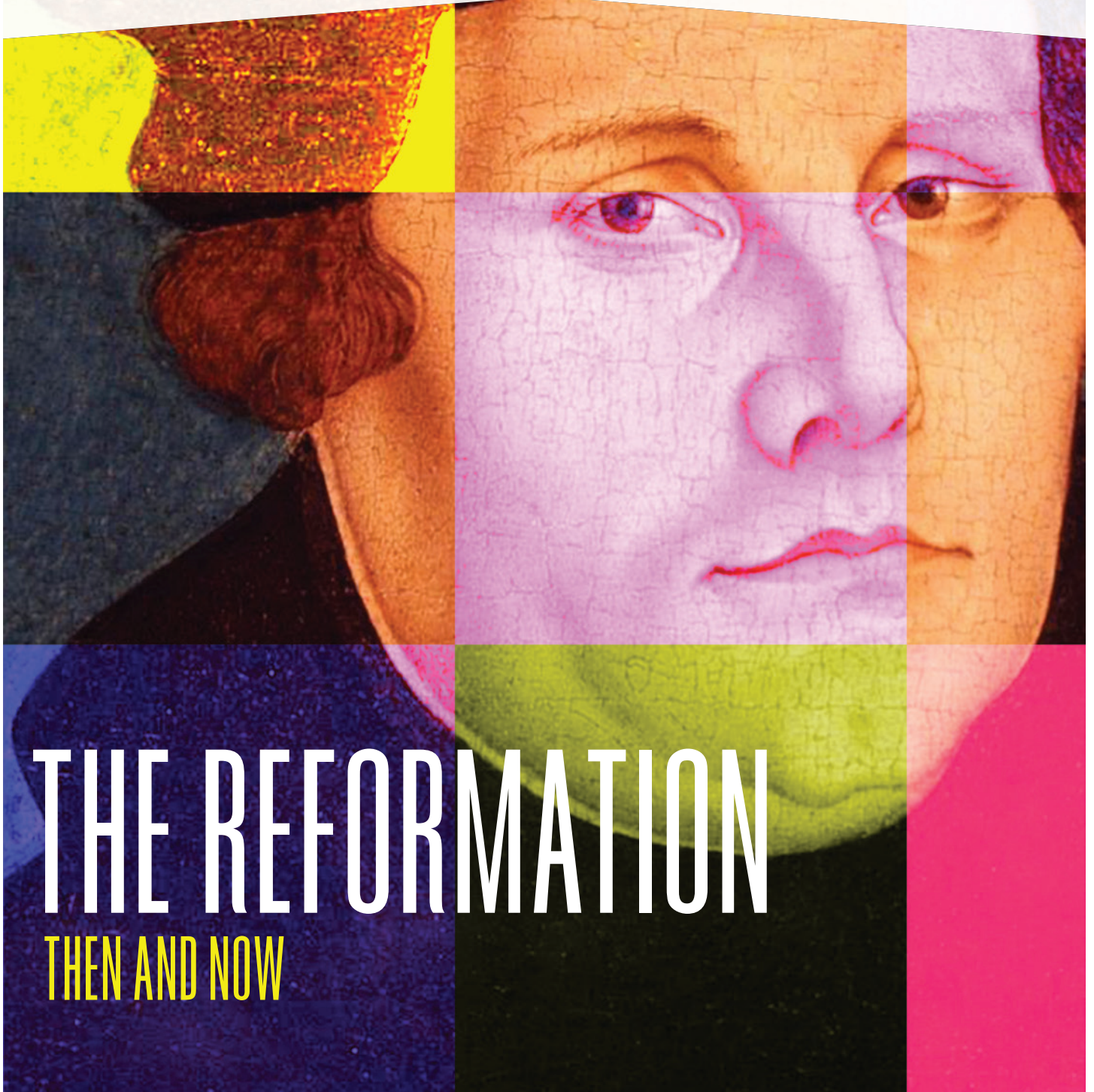
NEW HORIZONS

— in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH —

12 From Martin Luther to
American Evangelicals
// by Alan D. Strange

OCTOBER 2017

22 Review: VanDoodewaard's
Reformation Women
// by V. Van Dixhoorn



THE REFORMATION

THEN AND NOW

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 3** The Reformation of *Solus Christus*
By *Ryan M. McGraw*
- 5** The Reformation of Civil Government
By *David VanDrunen*
- 7** The Spirit of the Reformation
By *David Noe and John Muether*

DEPARTMENTS

- 9** Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations
A busy and fruitful year
- 10** Foreign Missions
Meet the Montgomerys
- 12** Christian Education
From Luther to evangelicals • Our membership vows • Out of the mouth ...
- 14** Home Missions
The plan for Houston
- 16** Stewardship
A benediction of peace
- 17** Prayer Calendar
- 19** News, Views, & Reviews

New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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Articles previously published may be slightly edited.

New Horizons (ISSN: 0199-3518) is published monthly except for a combined issue, usually August-September, by the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539; tel. 215-830-0900; fax 215-830-0350.

Letters to the editor are welcome. They should deal with an issue the magazine has recently addressed. Their language should be temperate, and they may not charge anyone with an offense. They should be brief, and they may be condensed by the editor.

Send inquiries, letters to the editor, and other correspondence to the editor at olinger.1@opc.org.

Send address changes to CCEsec@opc.org. Allow six weeks for address changes.

The digital edition (PDF, ePub, mobi) and an archive of previous issues are available at www.opc.org.

Views expressed by our writers are not necessarily those of the editors or official positions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Copies are distributed free to members and friends of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Nonmembers are asked to donate \$20.00 for an annual subscription (USD \$30.00 if sent to addresses in Canada; \$40.00 elsewhere abroad). A free e-mail PDF subscription is also available. Requests for a subscription should be sent to CCEsec@opc.org or the address below.

Periodicals postage is paid at Willow Grove, Pa., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *New Horizons in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, 607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539.

Among the people at the Summer Bible Camp at Redwood Christian Park near Santa Cruz were (from the left): Selah Wheat, Naomi Rauta, Dayla Fullalove, Stephen Garrisi, Honor Wheat, Abigail Elmore, Heidi Miller (assistant teacher), Rose Garrisi, and Teresa Madrigal. There was a wonderful time of fellowship and excellent teaching from the book of Esther by Glenn Ferrell, pastor of First OPC in San Francisco. Heather Miller taught the children's class.



THE REFORMATION OF *SOLUS CHRISTUS*



RYAN M. MCGRAW // The gospel is not merely *about* Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ *is* the gospel. *Solus Christus* means that salvation comes to sinners “through Christ alone.” Salvation, to be sure, involves professing those doctrines we hold to be true, but it also involves receiving in our hearts the divine-human person, in whom

are all the benefits of redemption.

Together with Scripture, grace, faith, and the glory of God, *solus Christus* is one of the so-called “five solas” of the Reformation. Reformed Christology, however, is generically catholic in that it drew from the classic Christian tradition. It is distinctively Reformed in relation to the application of the doctrine of Christ to believers.

Drawing from both the common and the distinctive aspects of Reformed Christology is vitally important for preserving and promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ in its purity and power. Only in doing so will Reformed churches be able to promote the doctrine of living to God, through Christ, by the Spirit. There remains a need for a catholic Christology in Reformed churches today, as well as a full-bodied Reformed view of the application of Christ’s work to us.

A Catholic Christology

In a sense, Roman Catholics and Protestants both confess that salvation is *solus Christus*. Although Roman

Catholicism teaches that Christ does not give believers all of the merits that they need for salvation at once, its official dogma teaches that even the merit of saints and angels come to believers through Christ in some manner. This reflects the fact that Christ is uniquely the Savior, both in Roman Catholic and in Protestant theology. While the end results of these confessional teachings are strikingly different for Roman Catholics and Protestants, they draw from the same Christological tradition.

Protestants have recognized that Scripture alone is the only rule of faith and practice. However, our forefathers also recognized that theology is not written without context. The Reformers believed that it was impossible for their churches to retain a sound Christology without appealing to the historical reflections of the church in turn. The early church took several centuries to hammer out the basic vocabulary needed to describe who Jesus is. The apostle John countered those who denied his true humanity (1 John 4:1–2). Athanasius and others rejected the teaching of the

Arians, who denied his full divinity.

Later theologians countered the teaching of Nestorius, who was accused of separating the divinity and humanity of Christ into two persons. This controversy in turn prompted reflection on Christ’s full divinity and genuine humanity being joined in one person.

By searching the Scriptures, the church concluded that Christ’s two natures were united in one person without being mixed or confused. Each nature retained its proper attributes, but Scripture often ascribes the works of either nature to the whole person.

The church also held, among other truths, that Christ has both a divine and a human will. By consistently refuting partial truths, the church gradually gained a clearer Christology from Scripture. It is hard to see how the church today could retain these mature reflections on the Savior by starting over in every generation.

In this light, it is not surprising that Reformed theologians interpreted Scripture in light of the ancient creeds. This is true of both the Reformation

and the post-Reformation periods. While modeled loosely on the book of Romans, Calvin's *Institutes*, for example, follows the ancient model of the Apostles' Creed. Heinrich Bullinger's *Decades* likewise opens with a treatment of the Creed and interprets it in light of Scripture and later creedal theology. Zacharias Ursinus incorporated the ancient creeds in his exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism.

In the early seventeenth century, Amandus Polanus began his treatment of theology proper by citing Christian creeds in full from the early church through the medieval period. When the Westminster divines designed a catechism for beginners in the faith, they too stated succinctly: "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever" (WSC 21).

Solus Christus must begin with a catholic confession of Christ. We should be surprised (and grieved) if members of our churches can say little about who Jesus is. If we love Christ and rejoice in him "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8), then should we not seek to know him as well as we can? If the hope of seeing Christ as he is in glory motivates our faith and life on earth (1 John 3:1–2), then can we be content to say only that we know that he is our Savior? We need a catholic Christology that grows out of the labors of pastors and teachers from the past in order to avoid being tossed about by every Christological wind of doctrine and to come to a unity of the faith and to maturity in our Lord (Eph. 4:11–16).

A Reformed Christology

The primary contribution to Christology made by Protestant theology in general, and by Reformed theology in particular, lies in soteriology. This relates to many areas of faith and practice, but especially to Christ's two natures and to the scope of salvation in Christ.

While the Reformed faith teaches that Christ is our Mediator in both natures (e.g., WLC 38–40), some medieval authors, such as Thomas Aquinas, taught that Christ is our Mediator in his human nature only. He held that while the divine nature informed all of the actions of the human nature, Christ is our Mediator in his human nature only, because he represents us only in his perfect humanity. While this view is close to the truth, Reformed authors have generally agreed that attributing Christ's work only to his human nature threatens to divide the unity of his person.

In the mid-seventeenth century, Patrick Gillespie represented the mature Reformed consensus on this point. He argued in *The Ark of the Covenant Opened*, first, that Christ's names and offices agreed with both natures. Second, his Godhead concurred with his humanity in every act of his mediation. Third, many acts of his work depended on his divine nature. Fourth, as Mediator, he performed many divine acts in his earthly ministry. Fifth, none of his mediatorial acts occurred without the concurrence of the other nature. Sixth, the union of both natures in the incarnation was requisite for his work as Mediator.

Illustrating these points in relation to Christ's death, Gillespie wrote, "It was the Son of Man, the Lord of life, that died on the cross, but it was the nature of man, not of God, wherein he died; yet it was the divine nature that did support him, and gave worth to his sacrifice." This view, taken as a whole, presses us to rely on Christ's entire person in both natures more fully than does its medieval predecessor.

Reformed theology also has a multifaceted view of how Christ alone saves us. Contrary to some Roman Catholic caricatures, which persist to the present day, Reformed theologians did not reduce salvation to forensic justification. Everything Christ did, he did for us and for our salvation. We must, however, be united to Christ by faith in order to receive any of these benefits. When we

receive Christ by faith, his perfect obedience becomes our perfect obedience. His suffering under God's wrath and curse frees us from the curse of the law. These elements constitute our justification in Christ, and they spill over into Christ's vindication by the Father in his resurrection, becoming our vindication before God in Christ.

Because Christ is the natural Son of God, we become the adopted children of God (John 1:12; Gal. 4:1–7). Because Christ is raised, we are alive to God and sin no longer has dominion over us. Therefore, our bodies will rise in Christ at the resurrection. This is the ground of our sanctification. Since Christ ascended into heaven, he made a place for us (John 14:1–2), and he ever lives to intercede for us, so that we might be with him and behold his glory. Westminster Larger Catechism 65–90 describes the entire Christian life and every element of salvation in terms of union and communion with Christ in grace and in glory. This is why Christ "became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord'" (1 Cor. 1:30–31).

The ideas embedded in the confession of *solus Christus* are vital to biblical Christianity, shaping both our doctrine and our practice. If the Trinity is the foundation of all fundamental articles of the faith, then Christology invites us into the fellowship of the triune God. Yet we must remember that sound doctrine is a means of knowing God in Christ by the Spirit, and so the gospel is the ground of our personal experience as well. While the Spirit brings Christians to Christ in different ways, we all have the same testimony, which is the work of Christ. Confessing *solus Christus* means receiving and resting on Christ, the whole Christ, and nothing but the Christ, as he is offered freely to us in the gospel. □

The author, an OP minister, teaches at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He quotes the NKJV.

THE REFORMATION OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT



DAVID VANDRUNEN // Although Scripture does not provide any detailed public policy agenda for New Testament believers, it does teach a number of important things about civil government. Thus, Christian doctrine rightly includes teaching about governmental authority, as reflected in our Confession of Faith.

The doctrine of civil government was not at the forefront of Reformation controversies in the sixteenth century, unlike matters of salvation, the sacraments, and the church. Nevertheless, the Reformers had deep theological and practical interest in the nature and responsibilities of civil government, as did many later Reformed Christians.

Pre-Reformation Teaching

The apostolic church lived under civil magistrates who did not confess Christ and sometimes persecuted people who did. Yet New Testament texts such as Romans 13:1–7 and 1 Peter 2:13–17 taught that God had ordained civil magistrates and that believers ought to honor and submit to them.

Following the Roman emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in the early fourth century, the status of Christians in society changed. The contemporary church historian Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, described the Roman Empire under Constantine as the fulfillment of Old Testament texts prophesying that war would cease and the wicked would be cut off: Constantine was realizing Christ's kingdom on earth. Shortly thereafter, Augustine (354–430) provided a much more

modest view. In his *City of God*, Augustine described Christians as sojourners, on a pilgrimage in this world toward the heavenly city. He acknowledged that Christians should participate in their political communities, but he taught that all earthly rulers and empires are provisional, not to be confused with Christians' eschatological hope.

In the fifth century, the "Christendom" model emerged. As described by Pope Gelasius I, there are "two powers" that exercise authority under God in this world: the emperor has authority over "temporal affairs" for the sake of "public order," and the priest controls the sacraments and "spiritual activities," toward the goal of "eternal life." Priest and emperor should submit to one another in their proper spheres.

This model was helpful in important respects. It affirmed that civil governments are *legitimate*, ordained by God. It also taught that their jurisdiction is *limited* and subject to God's authority.

This model also had problematic features. First, it essentially wed the church to the state in a confessionally unified Christian society. The New Testament, however, never suggests that Christians should expect or seek such a

society. Second, the state was expected to enforce the church's claims about doctrine and worship by punishing dissenters with the sword. This reality sat uncomfortably beside New Testament teaching that Christ's gospel and kingdom do not advance by the weapons of this world. Many who sought to reform the church—such as John Hus in the fifteenth century—would meet untimely ends as victims of this church-state alliance.

Initial Reformed Thinking

Because the Christendom model still prevailed in the sixteenth century, the Protestant Reformers were compelled to think about civil government theologically and practically. The best-known Reformers did not feel that they had to overturn all earlier medieval views on the subject, and they sometimes differed among themselves. But if we focus on Martin Luther and John Calvin, we can glean some important lessons.

First, they affirmed the common Christian view that civil governments are ordained by God and thus are legitimate. This could not be taken for granted, because some Anabaptist leaders of the time claimed that a thorough

reformation of Christianity required the rejection of all sword-bearing civil authority. Luther and Calvin appealed to texts such as Romans 13 and strongly rejected such claims.

Second, they affirmed the independence of civil magistrates and the honorable nature of their work. Certain streams of medieval thought—represented prominently by Pope Boniface VIII—had modified Gelasius’s “two powers” idea to make the civil magistrate essentially a vassal of the pope. Through the help of doctrines such as the “two kingdoms” or “two governments,” Luther and Calvin distinguished the coercion-backed work of the state from the church’s peaceful proclamation of the gospel, and they did not make the state’s legitimacy depend upon the church’s approval. In addition, they both taught that serving in civil office was an honorable calling in which Christians could serve God. This was rooted in their broader notion that Christians should pursue a variety of occupations. People were not second-class Christians because they devoted full-time work to common (rather than ecclesiastical) vocations, contrary to much medieval thought and practice.

The Reformers’ convictions about civil government in these areas were important and helpful, and remain relatively uncontroversial among Reformed people today. Yet other aspects of their doctrine of civil government proved to be far from settled. Two of these issues, which later Reformed Christians would reconsider, deserve mention.

One issue concerned the reach of New Testament commands about submission to civil authority. Luther and Calvin took strict views against civil resistance. Luther notoriously called on German magistrates to slaughter insurrectionist peasants. Calvin rejected all attempts to overthrow tyrannical magistrates except by lesser government officials who happened to have authority for that very purpose.

The second issue concerned the Christendom model. Although the Reformers obviously rejected a confes-

sionally unified Christian society that wed the state to the Roman Church, they continued to believe that civil authorities should punish heresy and blasphemy and suppress false churches—as judged by Reformed standards.

Later Reformed Thinking

These issues did not go away. Already in the mid to late sixteenth century, pressed especially by Roman Catholic persecution of Protestants in England and France, Reformed scholars developed theories of why, and under what conditions, resistance to unjust civil authority is justified. These theories went considerably beyond the narrow scope permitted by Calvin. This development had repercussions for years to come. In the seventeenth century, many English Reformed Christians supported the deposition and execution of King Charles I. In the eighteenth century, American Presbyterians widely supported the colonies’ rebellion against England.

It took longer for Reformed Christians to rethink the Christendom model, but they did. For example, when the Presbyterian Church in the USA was formed in 1788, it revised the Westminster Confession of Faith’s teaching about civil government, removing claims that the state should suppress heresy and blasphemy and denying that the state should favor one church over others. (The OPC’s version of the Confession reflects these changes.) In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many Reformed churches from the Continental tradition similarly revised Article 36 of the Belgic Confession.

Challenges Ahead

Reformed Christians can be grateful for the reformations of civil government already achieved. The sixteenth-century Reformers were biblically faithful in affirming the legitimacy and honorable character of civil authority, alongside its distinction and independence from ecclesiastical authority. The later reformations also moved Reformed teaching in good directions, in my judgment. While some of their conclusions about

justifiable civil resistance are certainly debatable, it was good that Reformed writers were not satisfied with Calvin’s strict views on submission to tyranny and undertook further biblical and theological investigation of the subject. We should be especially grateful, I believe, that so many Reformed churches have modified their confessions’ original statements about government suppression of false religion. It was shameful that early Protestants joined Roman Catholics in advocating religious persecution, but it was encouraging that many Reformed churches embraced notions of religious liberty long before Roman Catholics did (at Vatican II).

Reformed Christians today, however, in the face of cultural changes in the West, will likely have to wrestle with issues of civil resistance and religious liberty in ways that our parents and grandparents did not. If indeed an increasing number of public policies and civil officials become overtly hostile to Christian conviction, Reformed believers will have to renew older moral-theological reflection on the degree to which they can participate in the work of their governments and what occasions may justify or even require disobedience.

Many voices have begun to question the modern Western emphasis upon religious freedom and suggest that various other (alleged) civil rights should trump claims to religious liberty. Yet many Christian appeals to religious liberty are sloppy and inconsistent. Reformed believers need to think carefully about what religious freedom really means and what claims of religious liberty they can heartily make and support.

Our Reformed predecessors did not settle every detail of the doctrine of civil government, but perhaps contemporary Reformed believers, faced with today’s challenges, will be able to refine their predecessors’ work and bring further reformation to this area of Christian doctrine. □

The author, an OP minister, teaches at Westminster Seminary California.

THE SPIRIT OF THE REFORMATION



DAVID NOE AND JOHN MUETHER // **As Protestants committed to proclaiming the whole counsel of God, we Orthodox Presbyterians have spent the last year reflecting on our Reformation heritage. A series of articles in *New Horizons* has**

sought to present to the church both the history of what Luther, Calvin, and others left to us and the abiding relevance of that inheritance.

Most people in the OPC probably need little convincing that this history is interesting, with its cast of heroic characters and the many dramatic episodes. Not the least of these is Luther's challenge to debate the sale of indulgences, which he issued five hundred years ago this month. But it is the question of relevance that likely requires more defense. Why should we not think that Protestantism has finally exhausted itself? Is the Reformation in fact over, as some claim, and is it time to put this behind us? Are the ordinary means of grace that the Reformers recovered sufficient to sustain us, and why does our small denomination, if we are faithful, remain so culturally insignificant? These are the questions that this article seeks to answer.

Reformation Is Not Mere Nostalgia

First, we must understand the place for a knowledge of Protestant history in the life of our church. Various contributors to this series have capably explained how our commitment to the Reformation principles of the authority of God's

Word and the primacy of Christ's work affect the way we worship, conduct pastoral ministry, understand our vocations (both holy and common), suffer for the sake of Christ, and more.

We hope it has been clear that we must not view the sixteenth century as a golden age any more than did those men and women who lived through that violent and painful era. As Calvin himself said to John à Lasko, when asked for advice about pastoring the church in London: "Do not make an idol out of me or a Jerusalem out of Geneva."

Rather than idolizing what God has accomplished through others, we ought to seek a recovery of the lessons of tradition. After all, wisdom does not die with us, and the word *Protestant* does not mean to protest, as though we sought to overthrow, innovate, or promote a constant state of flux. Rather, it means to testify to that truth that is already contained in the Scriptures and commands our obedience through the power of the Holy Spirit and his illumination. It looks to a fixed and unchanging beacon. The Reformation was not a break from tradition, but rather an attempt to recover it aright, submitting the whole of the church's teaching to the Word of God. As the Reformers

always insisted, they left the Roman Catholic Church in order to continue the church catholic.

Reformation Is Not Innovation

To quote Calvin again, from his deathbed address that Beza recorded, "Change is always dangerous and often harmful." But because of the changing world around us, the Protestant faith always runs the risk of falling captive to the cultural instability that surrounds it. In this light, the call for a Reformed church always to be reforming has been used by some as a license to embrace change for its own sake.

For example, some of our sister denominations continue to feel pressure to ordain women. And there is pressure from Roman Catholic sources as well. Critics like Christian Smith level at the Protestant faith, and at us in the OPC by association, the charge that the Reformation has replaced one Pope with a thousand popes. Still others claim, as the late Richard John Neuhaus did when announcing his conversion to Rome, "Were Luther alive today, he would be a member of the Roman Catholic Church." Sometimes we also feel pressure from within, as Protestants wonder whether they can invest their

lives in a church, uncertain that it will be there for their children.

Historic vs. Contemporary Protestantism

Implicit in all of the articles in our series has been an important distinction between historic Protestantism and the contemporary state of the church in America. In a word, evangelicalism in its contemporary expression is not the faith of our fathers. In its narcissistic obsession with the present, its anti-intellectualism, its devotion to celebrity, and its longing for cultural relevance, modern evangelical faith and its revivalist commitments are in fact a denial of historic Protestantism.

J. Gresham Machen and others of our founding generation worked hard to distinguish themselves from the forerunners of this movement. In the interests of a confessional, historic faith, they fought first against the modernist denial of the supernatural and obsession with the social gospel, and then against the fundamentalist denial of Christian freedom and disregard for the Westminster Standards. In the words of John Murray, both were “modern substitutes” for the Reformed faith.

During this struggle, Machen was especially prescient in his refusal to compromise on the most basic question: doctrine and life were not to be severed. The Christian faith is as much what we believe as how we live, and vice versa. Much of contemporary Protestantism, on the other hand, represents a denial of the OPC’s founding. But historic Protestantism still remains the reliable path to biblical fidelity, and it is for this reason, not from nostalgia or a rose-colored view of the past, that the lessons of the Reformation matter for us.

That Word above All Earthly Powers

Having established the enduring relevance of the Reformation, we must ask whether a commitment to the ordinary means of grace is sufficient to sustain us. First, we must understand that every element of doctrine that forms

the basis for our life is to flow from the authoritative Word of God. This was emblazoned as the hallmark of the Reformation when Luther at the Diet of Worms famously said, “My conscience is captive to the Word of God.” Calvin, Beza, and a host of their students and colleagues never tired of explaining the significance of this seminal idea. For in it lies all comfort, stability, and hope. So at the Westminster Assembly, 130 years later, the divines wrote: “The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture” (WCF 1.10). In their warning about “private spirits” lies the antidote to the individualism and “thousand-pope” mentality that plague contemporary evangelicalism.

The Spirit and the Gifts Are Ours

God’s authoritative Word comes to us not only through the reading of it, but especially through preaching. As Stephen Tracey noted in his article, preaching returned to its place of prominence for the Reformers because in preaching “it is the Word of God that is let loose among the hearers.” Machen in his time admonished preachers to lead men by this proclamation “out of the crash and jazz and noise and rattle and smoke of this weary age into the green pastures and beside the still waters.”

By God’s grace, we also have those “visible words” called the sacraments. The mark of baptism sealing both ourselves and our covenant children, and our regular spiritual feasting upon the broken body and shed blood of our risen Lord nourish our souls. They remind us that our identity is the gift of the Spirit, and our life is hidden with Christ in heaven, where he is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Finally, the Reformers reoriented prayer as a means of grace. “Whereas the monastics offered it as a good work ascending to heaven,” wrote Dan Borvan,

“the Reformers saw it as an invocation for God to send down his favor based on the work of Christ.”

Let Goods and Kindred Go

This recognition in turn drives us to understand our day-to-day lives and our secular vocations in the light of a prayerful rendering to God. “Nothing could be more Protestant,” observed D. G. Hart, “than the way the Reformers came to understand the ordinary life of the average believer.” Rightly practiced, this entails receiving and using the good things of creation that are of temporal and not permanent value, with joy and gratitude.

This Mortal Life Also

Finally, if we can say that in some measure God has enabled the OPC to be faithful, why does our small fellowship remain so culturally insignificant? The answer lies in the comment of the OPC historian of a previous generation, Charlie G. Dennison, that “the OPC has no cultural bridge.” In other words, as a pilgrim church that has no continuing city and seeks a better country, the OPC has been driven by God’s providence away from multiple attempts to be “relevant.” Our continuing smallness is no cause for shame—after all, the Lord would only allow three hundred to go with Gideon against the Midianites. He has for the most part spared us from the dissatisfaction that Paul Woolley observed, earlier in our history, from those who yearned for the church “to have many members and much money and read about itself often in the newspapers.”

Relevance and cultural significance, if adopted as aims, are synonyms for compromise and doctrinal indifference. May our sovereign Lord grant that we be a church that is always being reformed according to his Word, and thus remain faithful, by his grace, to the spirit of the Reformation. □

Dr. Noe teaches at Calvin College, and Mr. Muether teaches at Reformed Theological Seminary. They are OP ruling elders.

A BUSY YEAR FOR INTERCHURCH RELATIONS

// JACK W. SAWYER

The Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (CEIR) has enjoyed a fruitful year. Beginning with its Spring meeting in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, last March, plans were made for numerous contacts with sister churches. The goal, as always, was to seek ways to foster greater unity with brethren of like faith and practice. Additionally, the Committee prepared an unusually large number of recommendations for the Eighty-fourth General Assembly.

Fraternal delegates were sent to represent the OPC at the synods of the Bible Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church of the United States, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Heritage Reformed Congregations, and the Free Reformed Churches in North America. Delegates travel in September for the triennial synod of the Reformed Churches in New Zealand. During July, the OPC was represented at the ninth quadrennial meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches. In November, the forty-third meeting of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council will be convened in Grand Rapids with the OPC represented. Following NAPARC, the CEIR will meet at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary.

Our Eighty-fourth General Assembly hosted fraternal representatives from twelve churches. From Australia to Atlanta, Brazil to Basle, Colombia (South America) to Columbia (South Carolina), Edinburgh to Indiana, they came from near and far to address us with messages of affection and encouragement. It seemed to one observer “as if Aaron and Hur had appeared to lift up the arms of our dear church in the struggle to remain faithful in our pilgrim calling.” CEIR hosted its annual ecumenical colloquium on Friday night.

The CEIR recommended to the General Assembly: (1) accepting the invitation of the Evangelical Reformed Church/

Westminster Confession to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship, (2) responding to the Bible Presbyterian Church by offering full ecclesiastical fellowship, (3) apologizing to the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia for allowing our previous relationship to lapse in an unworthy manner, offering to them corresponding relations, (4) establishing corresponding relations with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, North East India, (5) offering the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) ecclesiastical fellowship, and (6) amending the OPC’s Rules for Ecclesiastical Relationships so that relationships with churches with which the OPC does not share geographical proximity may be adjusted, upon approval of the General Assembly and consultation with the other church (see <http://opc.org/relations/rules.pdf>).

The CEIR also requested that if Synod Meppel (2017) of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN) acted to approve the admission of biblically unqualified persons to the teaching and ruling offices of the church, the Eighty-fourth GA constitute the four OPC delegates to the ninth ICRC to act as a commission, to act on behalf of and with the full power of the General Assembly until the Eighty-fifth Assembly. That being approved, the CEIR appointed Messrs. Bube, Curto, Nakhla, and Sawyer as this commission. The commission was convened and formulated a proposal (given conclusive actions of the RCN Synod) to the 9th meeting of the ICRC, in Jordan, Ontario, on July 12–19, that the membership of the RCN be suspended, according to the prescriptions of the ICRC Constitution regarding ordination, Article IV.4 (see <http://icrconline.com/about-constitution.html>).

Executing this commission was a sobering duty for the OPC delegates, but they were encouraged that the ICRC—including the RCN!—agreed that the RCN had placed themselves outside the ICRC basis for membership. The ICRC voted 25–4, with two abstentions, to suspend the RCN immediately from membership. The integrity of the ICRC was maintained.

On a cheerful note, ICRC membership was approved for the Presbyterian Church of Uganda and the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia. Positive presentations were made on the coordination of missions, diaconal ministry, and theological education. It was a great joy to witness Reformed believers from every continent gathered in a common confession of the Reformed faith.

From Willow Grove to New Zealand to NAPARC, the CEIR has been privileged to serve the General Assembly and all the members of the OPC this year.

The author, an OP pastor, is a member of (and the administrator for) the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations.

FOREIGN MISSIONS

FROM MIDDLE-EARTH TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

// A NEW MISSIONARY



Mr. and Mrs. M. with their children (by age):
Gavin, Logan, Ewan, Aidan,
and Rhiannon

My call to foreign missions began when I was born into a Christian family. My parents were not Reformed at that time, but they were Bible-believing Christians. Before I was three years old, they had joined the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and I had been baptized. Although I don't remember the event itself, I do remember the day of my baptism—perhaps my earliest memory.

When I became a Christian is a mystery. I remember my parents teaching me from a young age to confess my sins to Jesus. I remember praying behind my bedroom door, in my bed at night, and even on the school bus. I also remember hearing a sermon on “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matt. 5:6) and realizing that I was hungering and thirsting for this righteousness. Because of the uncertainty surrounding the timing of my conversion, assurance has been a long struggle. I have learned that it is not *when* we first believed that matters, but rather *who* we trust now.

As a teenager, I grew fascinated with languages through the works of J. R. R. Tolkien. The languages of Middle-earth were fictional, but the interest they awoke in me was real. Throughout high school and as a university undergraduate, I dabbled in numerous languages—Spanish, French, Latin, German, and even Scotch Gaelic—but became conversant in none. I also enjoyed Hebrew and Greek at seminary. But the desire to someday truly “buckle down” and become fluent in a *spoken* foreign language remained with me.

My first cross-cultural experiences began in 2006, when I joined a software firm with employees, offices, and clients spanning the globe. Though I never traveled to any of our far-flung outposts, the two years I spent working for this organization planted within me an enduring interest in foreign peoples and cultures. It made me aware of cross-cultural differences, while at the same time helping me to see the shared

humanity in all peoples.

When we moved to State College, Pennsylvania, as church planters in late 2011, my family quickly became aware of our new community's international flavor. Because of the presence of Penn State University, this small town in rural Pennsylvania is home to thousands of internationals representing more than half the nations in the world. In the six years since, I have volunteered with two different international ministries, and my family has hosted people in our home from the Netherlands, Turkey, and elsewhere. I have served as an English practice partner to an agnostic from Iran, and once had the privilege to give an Easter-themed talk to a predominantly Muslim audience. As one of my friends in international ministries likes to say, in State College, the nations are on your doorstep.

Though we didn't know it at the time, our lives changed forever at the Eighty-second General Assembly of the OPC in 2015. A missionary presented his work in Asia and asked the Assembly to pray that God would raise up young men who would be willing to learn the language and commit their lives to that place. I then prayed, “Lord, I don't see how it could ever happen ... but if you want me to go, I'll go.”

The possibility of serving in that place seemed crazy. The church plant we served had only recently been organized. After years of instability, our young family had finally settled into a community we loved. We had purchased a home. I knew my wife would think I was crazy if I told her about my prayer. So I didn't tell her—or anybody. In fact, I forgot about it.

The next month, after returning home, our family hosted two exchange students from there. After they left, my wife and I began discussing the possibility of taking on a family project. Why not learn a foreign language? Both of us enjoyed languages, and we thought it would be a good way to cultivate a global Christian identity in our children. But what language should we learn? I had a seminary classmate from Brazil, but there were millions of Christians in Asia. Wouldn't it be great if we and our kids could travel and speak with them?

So we decided to learn the language spoken there. A friend in international ministries at Penn State put me in contact with a Christian lady who speaks that language, who graciously agreed to tutor us. Her niece began tutoring our sons.

The memory of my prayer did not return to me until about half a year later—after my wife and I had traveled to Asia with a tourist group, and a colleague began to nudge me about the need in Asia. Yet even after the memory revived, the prospect of leaving State College did not appeal to us. We loved our community and our congregation, and we were not looking for an exit. So we demurred. But the Lord had not forgotten my prayer.

In October 2016, the Committee on Foreign Missions contacted us with the request that we consider service in Asia. Though it has not been an easy decision, we have come to believe that the convergence of our interest, the Lord's providence, and the opportunity to serve the global church has called us to this ministry. This change is costly, and we don't know what the future holds. But we know that Jesus is worth it. "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, *even there* your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me" (Ps. 139:9–10).

GOD'S LEADING HAND

The New Missionary's Wife

I have recently been pondering these words of the hymn: "He leadeth me: O blessed thought! O words with heav'nly comfort fraught! Whate'er I do, where'er I be, still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me."

God's hand brought me to him in my late teenage years. I grew up going to mainline churches, but I never heard the gospel until I heard it preached at Westminster OPC in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. When I was seventeen, a young man invited me to attend his church youth group and, later, to attend worship. I noticed a vibrancy and fullness to the worship in this church that I had not experienced before. The Lord held my hand, and led me to himself through careful study of his Word, through youth group Bible study, and through the faithful preaching I heard in church. I professed my faith and joined the church at age nineteen.

The young man and I continued to date through our high school and college years, attended college year-round so we could graduate early, and got married a week after graduating. We were both twenty-one. Over the course of the next ten years, we had five children, spaced two years apart. We now have four sons and a daughter.

My love for missions grew out of my love for reading. One of my favorite things to do with my kids is to read out loud to them. If I could sit all day and read to them, I would! As part of our homeschool days, we will often read missionary biographies. I fell in love with these stories of God using simple, faithful people to do amazing things for his kingdom.

Each story is unique, but they are similar in that those faithful people simply followed God's call to "go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15).

The Lord gradually and providentially put Asia on our hearts. We became interested in Asia in the summer of 2015, when we had the opportunity to host two Asia boys for a week as part of a student exchange program. Later that summer, we decided to learn an Asian language as a family project. We found a native speaker who was eager and willing to tutor us for free, and her niece began teaching our boys. We are excited to be able to learn together. Over the past two years, we've grown to love that language. It is challenging, yet fascinating.

Our hearts opened up to the world and its cultures as we lived and served in an international community. State College, Pennsylvania, home of Penn State University, has a sizeable group of international students. We've had opportunities to interact with and host students from many different countries. In our community, we've met several Asian students. I also chat regularly with an Asian woman I met at our local library. She is now back home in her country, but I video chat with her almost every week, and I also read aloud to her son to help him with his English.

The following spring, we had a chance to go on a tourist trip to Asia, visiting three major cities. Our trip stirred up more of an interest in Asian culture and history—especially the history of the Asian church. We met an older Christian woman who was openly reading her Bible out loud in a park. In one city, we visited the a museum, home of the Nestorian stele, a stone tablet that documents 150 years of early Christianity in that country.

As God continues to write our story, I am so thankful we have this privilege to serve his kingdom. The Lord is doing a remarkable work in Asia, and I am thankful we get to play a small part in the growth of the church there. I pray that he would use us mightily in this calling. May we deny ourselves and follow him joyfully, and may I remain "content, whatever lot I see, since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

What's New

// Comings/Goings

Mr. and Mrs. J. M. and their five children arrived in Asia in early September, where they will labor through the end of this year (while **Mr. and Mrs. S. F.** are in the U.S. on furlough) before moving to a different city.

Tentmaker missionary **Miss T. L. L.** completed her yearlong furlough and returned to Asia at the beginning of September, along with new missionary associates **Miss M. S.** (Calvary OPC, Glenside, Pa.) and **Mr. A. P.** (Calvin OPC, Phoenix, Ariz.).

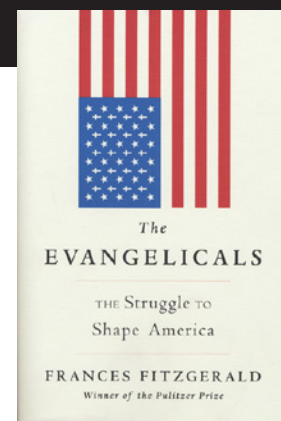
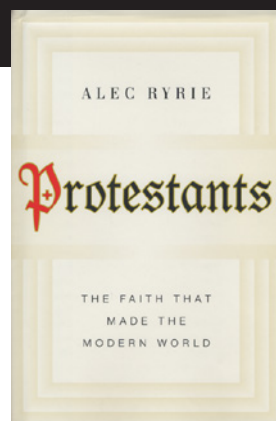
FROM MARTIN LUTHER TO AMERICAN EVANGELICALS

// ALAN D. STRANGE

We've gone through a series of five hundredth anniversaries of events that were significant for the Reformation of the sixteenth century (e.g., Calvin's birth in 1509 and Knox's in 1514). Now we have finally reached the anniversary of what's reckoned as the Reformation's proper starting date, October 31, 1517. On that date, Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to Wittenberg Castle's church door (or something like that—what actually happened is disputed). A plethora of books have emerged to mark the occasion, addressing many aspects of the Reformation and its legacy.

Two books are receiving significant press attention. One is on the rise and spread of Protestantism broadly (Alec Ryrie, *Protestants: The Faith That Made the Modern World*, published by Viking), and the other focuses on the United States and the history of evangelicals as a significant part of the Protestant movement (Frances FitzGerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*, published by Simon & Schuster). Ryrie is an English historian who is also a Protestant minister, and that sensibility pervades his book. He can be rather critical of much that goes by the name Protestant, which he defines quite broadly—calling them “fighters and lovers,” asserting that “from the beginning a love affair with God has been at the heart of their faith”—while at the same time clearly appreciative of the movement as a whole. FitzGerald, on the other hand, while striving to be fair, is essentially out of sympathy with her subjects, and this too colors her whole work.

Ryrie begins with Luther and the Lutherans. He well portrays Luther's stand on the Word, over against the Pope and councils—though, he avers, Luther does not make the inerrancy claim of the fundamentalists years later. Throughout his book, Ryrie says that Protestants, though centered on the Word, are likely to see future success if they are not rationalistic about it, which he sees fundamentalism as being, having its roots in Protestant Orthodoxy. Ryrie argues that



Pentecostalism and the like—those approaches that are open to continuing speaking of the Spirit—are the likely future of Protestantism. He sees Calvinism as failing to unite Protestants, though it more than anything gave it the old college try, both on the continent and in Britain. (His chapter on “The British Maelstrom” is first-rate, making up for some of his factual errors with respect to American history.) Ryrie's treatment of Korea and China, the latter being the fastest-growing nation for Protestants, is also excellent.

There is much to learn in FitzGerald's account. There are details here that are rarely brought together in one work and with such skill (though occasionally marred by minor errors). In her hands, however, evangelicals remain caricatures of themselves, not people with whom any thoughtful person can identify. While there is much to critique, for instance, respecting the rise of the Moral Majority and all that has followed in the politics of evangelicals on the right since the late 1970s, FitzGerald finds them so distasteful that they often seem unreal in her treatment. She treats Machen in her examination of fundamentalism and identifies the influences of both R. J. Rushdoony and Francis Schaeffer on the rise of the evangelical right.

FitzGerald starts where many Americans started to become aware of evangelicals: with Jimmy Carter, whose claim to be “born again” baffled many in the media and the academy at the time, soon followed by outsized figures like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, James Dobson and others—though no one embodied a broader evangelicalism more than Billy Graham, in some respects, as both books point out. But FitzGerald quickly goes back to the roots of evangelicals in this country—the First and Second Great Awakenings, of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, respectively. It is the Calvinistic and then Arminian (and even Pelagian) ministries of Edwards (whom Ryrie calls humane, which is an accurate read of a man often seen entirely as a rigorist), Whitefield, Campbell, Finney, and others that came to embody this diverse thing called evangelicalism.

FitzGerald quotes George Marsden's definition: “Evan-

gelicalism today includes any Christians traditional enough to affirm the basic beliefs of the old nineteenth-century evangelical consensus: the Reformation doctrine of the final authority of the Bible, the real historical character of God's saving work recorded in Scripture, salvation to eternal life based on the redemptive mission of Christ, the importance of evangelism and missions, and the importance of a spiritually transformed life" (p. 3). This definition highlights the spiritual character of evangelicalism.

The order thus remains for most evangelicals that what they believe to be paramount spiritually should be paramount politically. That abortion and same-sex marriage appear to evangelicals to be especially egregious violations of God's law should lead us to expect evangelicals to oppose such practices at the ballot box and in the legislature. There has also always been an evangelical left concerned about social welfare, and we may today be witnessing the revival of such (and the transformation of the Christian right) as evangelicals tire of being taken for granted by Republicans and begin to be concerned about income inequality, the environment, and the like.

Interestingly, Ryrie, who in addressing Protestantism is focusing on something larger than evangelicalism, never loses sight of the spirituality that is at the core of Protestantism. In a particularly perceptive treatment of the South African experience, Ryrie ends by saying, "Protestant movements that become too deeply attached to ... social and political issues tend to find that they are running out of steam. Like it or loathe it, the heart of Protestantism's message is a spiritual one, a message of salvation and of divine power" (p. 361).

To be sure, there is a cautionary tale here. Evangelicals in America have too often been held captive by a cultural and political agenda that they assume to be biblical, though the Bible, in fact, prescribes neither a form of civil government nor the details of such government. Yet, as Ryrie points out well in his volume, Protestants are those chiefly who have embraced the love of God in Christ and for whom everything else, politics included, is decidedly secondary.

Both the narrative sweep and the handling of the details make these critical volumes worth reading in this banner year for Protestants and their evangelical heirs.

The author, an OP minister, teaches at Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

☆ Congratulations

The **Shorter Catechism** has been recited by:

- **Brian, Jan, and Danielle Wortman**, *Christ Covenant OPC, Sheridan, IN*

The **Children's Catechism** has been recited by:

- **Isaiah Stahl**, *Redeemer OPC, Atlanta, GA*

OUR MEMBERSHIP VOWS

The Trinity in Scripture

Glen J. Clary

The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that there is only one true God who eternally exists in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This teaching is at the very heart of the Christian religion. It plays a central role in Christian theology and worship.

The doctrine of the Trinity is derived from many passages of Scripture, such as Jesus' instructions to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19), and Paul's benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God [the Father] and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor. 13:14).

It is noteworthy that all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in the baptism of Jesus. As the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and came to rest on Jesus, the Father spoke from heaven and identified Jesus as his Son. Thus, all three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are clearly mentioned as distinct persons (see Mark 1:9–11).

The doctrine of the Trinity is well summarized in the First Catechism:

- Q. 6. *Is there more than one true God?*
 A. No. There is only one true God.
- Q. 7. *In how many Persons does this one God exist?*
 A. In three Persons.
- Q. 8. *Name these three Persons.*
 A. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Shorter Catechism also offers a good summary of the doctrine of the Trinity.

- Q. 5. *Are there more Gods than one?*
 A. There is but one only, the living and true God.
- Q. 6. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?*
 A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

● Out of the Mouth . . .

Earlier in my pastorate, I asked a three-year-old congregant what he had gotten out of the morning sermon. His eyes lit up as he exclaimed, "Oh! I got a sucker out of the sermon!"

—Matthew Kingsbury
 Aurora, Colo.

Note: If you have an example of the humorous "wisdom" that can come from children, please send it to the editor.

HOUSTON: AN UPWARD CALL OF GOD

// MARK SUMPTER



Church-planting intern Miller Ansell inviting people to write down answers to the question “Why does humanity exist?”

After months of preparation, a church-planting program has been launched in the Houston, Texas, area. (*Editor’s note: This article was written before Hurricane Harvey devastated Houston, which will impact ministry there for years to come.*)

Three Planning Principles

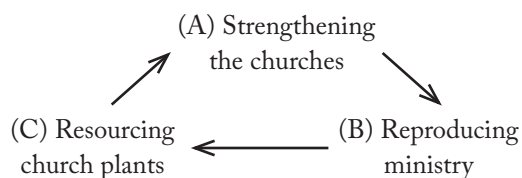
The Houston pastors—the Rev. Adam York and the Rev. Robert Arendale—along with some other local church officers, have determined that we would focus on:

(1) *Giving priority to strengthening the local churches*

Pastor Arendale of Cornerstone OPC pointed the way forward: “Giving priority to our existing local churches in the Houston area will enable us to see the church take steps to improve her worship and witness.... As our local churches are strengthened, it will be natural to start more churches.”

(2) *Using a three-point grid for specific discussion*

At one of the planning meetings, Randy Perkins, a ruling elder at Cornerstone, captured the three-point grid for us. He said something like “Why not strengthen our local churches by cultivating ministry—especially evangelism? Then we’ll see individuals and groups form as possible new church plants.” Bingo! That helped us along. Here are the three points (explained in the box at the right):



(3) *Moving forward with a statement of purpose*

To guide us, we prepared a working statement of our biblical purpose in expanding a Reformed witness in Houston, like the one here:

Because our risen Lord commissioned his church to make disciples, through baptizing and teaching, we are committed to carrying out the work of expanding the church, in fellowship with and obedience to Christ—with an aim to apply the Scriptures and the standards of the OPC—by:

A) our involvement with the global body of Christ in fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18–20),

B) teaching the whole counsel of God, so that believers and their children might be equipped for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12),

C) training individuals and the corporate body of our two Houston congregations to take part in the personal and public proclamation of the good news in word and deed in our neighborhoods, communities, counties, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), and

D) planting more churches throughout the city of Houston, specifically using the method of daughter churches (the principle that the local church [in Antioch, Acts 13:1–2] sends Paul and Barnabas to plant churches).

Three-Point Grid

Strengthening the churches means giving focus to leadership, worship, prayer, education, ministries of mercy, evangelism, and administration.

Reproducing ministry implements the means of grace (the Word, the sacraments, and prayer), looking to God to grow healthy believers, who in turn help develop healthy churches that reproduce themselves in doctrine and life.

Resourcing church plants means anticipating that healthy local churches will give birth to more churches; it’s mother churches planting daughter churches.



Theological reflections in Houston

Five practical reasons for planting daughter churches have surfaced:

1. The daughter church can receive the care and oversight of the mother church's eldership.
2. The daughter church has already started to function as a new body, albeit in a new formation.
3. The daughter church has the resources of size and practical tools (e.g., a new website).
4. The daughter church has worked on purpose, philosophy, and practical applications for ministry.
5. The daughter church can deploy her gifts and roles for effective voluntarism and service.

Planting daughter churches stirs faith! It means giving away people, resources, and finances to see the kingdom of God spread. But there are great rewards. As Charles Spurgeon remarked in a sermon preached in April 1865, "We encourage our members to leave us to found other Churches; nay, we seek to persuade them to do it. We ask them to scatter throughout the land to become the goodly seed which God shall bless. I believe that so long as we do this we shall prosper."

Internship in Church Planting

Raising up new church planters for the OPC has received a boost in recent months. The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension approved the plans and funding for two church-planting interns, including Mr. Miller Ansell, who now serves in Houston. Training a church planter includes five to ten hours each week in public ministry of outreach and evangelism. Here in Houston, we've seen thirty to forty new people come into contact with us at the Good Shepherd OPC

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: October 4, 18.

Bible study in Stafford (southwest Houston). Our attendance hasn't changed much, but our outreach activity with the community has soared. We have visited local businesses and given away muffins and literature on the Bible study.

On four occasions we have sung at a Mr. Car Wash, with the permission of the manager. While workers are detailing cars, and other folks are waiting while their car dries or a dashboard is cleaned, we stand nearby singing from *Trinity Hymnal*. It's like "Singing at the Car Wash Blues"!

Miller has also made use of a foam board in a local town square. People walk by and write down their responses to questions like "What is man's purpose?" or "What is the Bible about?" All kinds of answers are written on the board, and some are truth. We get the opportunity to listen in and give consideration to folks. At the same time, we aim to tell the truth, presenting Christ and his glory and goodness.

In our times of outreach, we've been blessed with good conversations. While the granite fountain at the Sugar Land Town Square spews water and mist, there's a concert of light rock taking place on the steps of City Hall. On this Friday night, a young man approached us after seeing the written question on our handheld foam board, "What was Jesus like?"

"Hi, my name is Mark Sumpter; this is my wife, Peggy—go ahead, take a sharpie and write an answer."

They saw that several people had already written answers. The husband hesitated a little. He then asked, "Which religious group are you with?" I said, "We are Bible-believing, Bible-teaching Presbyterians."

He brightened up. "Oh, let me ask: is your group one that follows John Calvin?"

"Wow"—I thought quietly to myself. About this time, his wife joined the conversation.

Then he said, "I'm Catholic; my friend, also a Catholic, up in Chicago converted to Protestantism, and now he's teaching me about Calvin."

Our conversation went on for a while, including references to Ephesians 1. He told me of his concern about his grandfather, who has a terminal illness. We exchanged contact information, and we've had follow-up. I prayed with them that evening. What providence!

Putting Our Sights on Christ

We know our work is cut out for us in Houston. But we gladly serve our risen Lord, and we're eager to see his fruit in this harvest. Pray for the efforts to plan wisely and in faith about church planting. We are hoping to publish a resource and guide called "Priority One: Let Houston Hear His Voice: Aiming for Faithfulness—A 15-year Plan for the OPC."

We have one desire: to see the name of Jesus Christ honored through the multiplication of churches. Thank you for joining us in our prayers for the harvest.

The author is the regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest.

A BENEDICTION OF PEACE

// ROBERT ARENDALE

The apostle Paul closes his first letter to the Thessalonian church with a wonderful and encouraging benediction: “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:23).

In 1 Thessalonians 1–3, Paul recounts the grand truth of God’s work on behalf of his people. Then in chapters 4–5 come the imperatives of Christian living. For example, he writes, “We ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.... For this is the will of God, your sanctification.... Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for yourselves have been taught by God to love one another” (4:1, 3, 9). Through the power of his word and Spirit, the Lord has brought us from death to life; therefore, we are to walk in grace and truth, growing in sanctification and loving one another more and more. In his closing benediction, Paul comes full circle to remind the Thessalonians that God himself will accomplish his holy purposes in his people.

First, we should note the emphasis on God’s work to sanctify his people. Yes, we are called to grow in holiness, to fight against sin, and to pursue godliness (1 Thess. 4:1–5:22), but ultimately God is doing his work in us (1 Thess. 5:23–24). Paul makes this clear: God himself will sanctify his people. God is working out his purposes in his people each and every day. We work out our own salvation, but God is working in us (Phil. 2:12–13). Or, as the apostle John puts it, “his Bride [i.e., the church] has made herself ready,” yet “it was

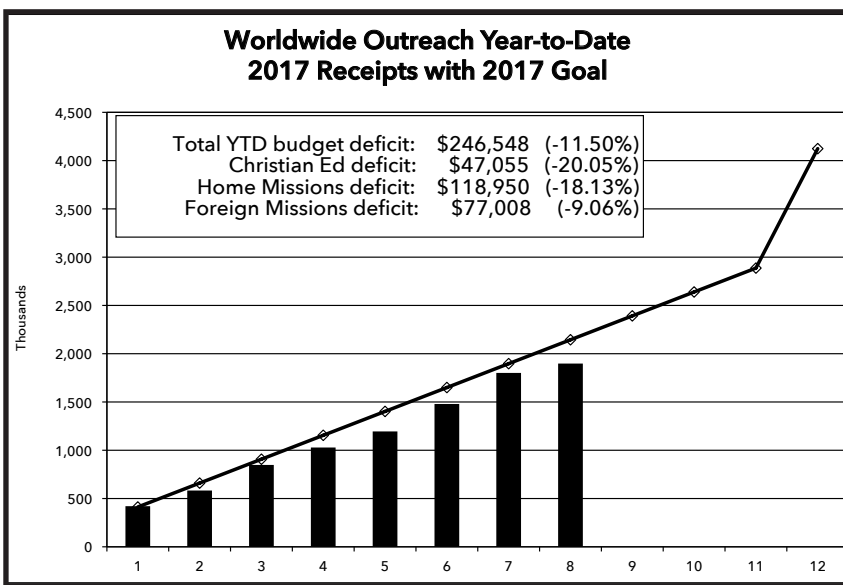
granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” (Rev 19:7–8).

Second, the Lord is not just at work in our sanctification today; he will sanctify us completely at the judgment day. Thus, Paul is speaking both of God’s work in sanctification throughout our lives and of his work in glorification at the end of our earthly life. At “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (i.e., his second coming), the Lord will keep us blameless. The Christian need not fear the second coming of our Lord. We need not be weighed down with such thoughts as, “What if I’m not sufficiently holy when the Lord returns?” Those who belong to Christ will be kept blameless at the day of Christ. Jude says something similar in his glorious benediction, speaking of “him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy” (Jude 24).

Finally, we should note that the foundation of Paul’s hope and confidence for the people of God is the character of God: “He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it” (1 Thess. 5:24). “God is faithful” (1 Cor. 1:9). He will accomplish his purpose. And his great purpose is to bring his people home to be with him! Indeed, “he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

What joy this gives us! What peace this gives us! What hope this gives us! Brothers and sisters, may God’s glorious faithfulness bring us joy and peace this day. And may we serve him today in humility and boldness. May we serve our glorious King with all that we are and with all that we have!

The author is the pastor of Cornerstone OPC in Jersey Village, Tex.



OCTOBER

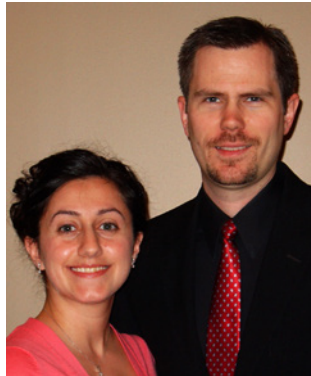
1. **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for safe travel and good visits in OP churches. / **Lowell and Mae Ivey**, Virginia Beach, Va. Pray for new Christian education classes recently begun at Reformation Presbyterian Church. / Pray for the work of **Alan Strange** and **Derrick Vander Meulen**, coeditors of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.
2. **Bob and Grace Holda**, Oshkosh, Wis. Pray that those who attend Resurrection Presbyterian Church will grow in faith and love through God's ordinary means of grace. / **Mr. and Mrs. J. M.**, Asia. Pray for Mrs. M. as she homeschools their children. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **Danny Olinger** as he meets with the Committee on Christian Education over the next two days.
3. Tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia. Pray for opportunities to talk with students about Christ. / **Dave and Elizabeth Holmlund**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia. Pray for the development of the mission work in Downingtown, Pa. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.



*Dave and Elizabeth
Holmlund*
4. **Ryan (and Rachel) Heaton**, church-planting intern, Naples, Fla. Pray for Ryan as he takes up various duties in the context of home missions. / Missionary associates **E. K.** and **M. S.**, Asia. Pray for their witness in the classroom. / Pray for **Katie Stumpff** as she learns her new job as Home Missions administrative assistant.
5. Missionary associate **A. P.**, Asia. Pray for the ministry to the Russian-speaking students. / **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray that recent outreach efforts at Immanuel OPC will produce fruit for the glory of Christ. / Army reserve chaplain **Stephen (and Lindsey) Roberts**.
6. **Paul and Sarah Moureale**, St. Louis, Missouri. Pray that God would provide the members of Gateway OPC with new avenues for gospel witness. / **Mr. and Mrs. M. M.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. M. as he continues to work on developing materials for training deacons. / Army reserve chaplain **Andrew (and Elizabeth) Barshinger**.
7. Pray for tentmaker missionary **T. D.**, Asia, as she maintains a busy teaching schedule. / **Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray with the members of Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church for more conversions and baptisms. / Pray for **ongoing preparations for the 2018 Timothy Conference**.
8. Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan. Pray for new believers facing persecution from family members because of their faith. / Pray for **stated clerk Ross Graham** as he prepares and distributes the electronic versions of the General Assembly Minutes.
9. Pray that affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan, will be an encouragement to the students she teaches. / **Mika and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Pray that God would fill the members of New City Fellowship with love for their neighbors and wisdom to serve them. / *Ordained Servant* editor **Greg Reynolds**.
10. **Daniel and Amber Doleys**, Springfield, Ohio. Praise God for the deep sense of unity and love at Living Water OPC. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Czech Republic. Pray that the outreach of their church will honor God and be effective. / *Ordained Servant* proofreader **Diane Olinger**.
11. Missionary associate **Kathleen Winslow**, Czech Republic. Pray for a fruitful term of teaching and learning experiences. / **Jason and Amanda Kirklin**, Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church, Waco, Tex. Pray for outreach to new and returning students at Baylor University. / **Aijalon (and Jana) Church**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Sinking Spring, Pa.
12. **Brett and Maryann Mahlen**, Orland Park, Ill. Pray that new seminary students at Stateville Correctional Facility will grow in their understanding of God's Word. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for opportunities to reach young people. / Army reserve chaplain **Paul (and Mary) Berghaus**.
13. Missionary associates **Markus and Sharon Jeromin**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for a good response to the Mission's literature ministry. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church will be organized by 2020. / **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the finance director.
14. **Matthew and Lois Cotta**, Pasadena, Calif. Pray with thanksgiving to God for providing Pastor Cotta to serve as church planter for Pasadena OPC. / **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for continued blessings on the church-planting work in Maldonado. / **Doug Watson**, part-time staff accountant.
15. **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that they will continue to have new ministry opportunities among the Karimojong. / **Jeremy and Gwen Baker**, Yuma, Ariz. Pray that God would provide Yuma OPC with new opportunities for outreach. / **Andrew (and Cyndi) Myers**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.

16. Miller (and Stephanie) Ansell, church-planting intern, Houston, Tex. Pray that God would use Miller's gospel conversations at a local town square to draw people to himself. / Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube**, traveling in India this week. / **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.

17. David and Rashel Robbins, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the men leading Scripture lessons in local villages. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyoming. Pray for God's generous provision of a new place for Grace Reformed Fellowship to worship. / **Scott (and Elizabeth) Creel**, yearlong intern at Redemption OPC in Gainesville, Fla.



David and Rashel Robbins

18. Dave and Jane Crum, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California. Pray for new opportunities to plant OP congregations in the region. / Pray for the labors of missionary associate **Leah Hopp** in Nakaale, Uganda. / **Stephen (and Felicia) Lauer**, yearlong intern at Redeemer OPC in Beavercreek, Ohio.

19. Missionary associates **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. Praise the Lord for the completion of the new clinic building. / **Matt and Elin Prather**, Corona, Calif. Pray for ongoing growth in faith and love for the members of Corona Presbyterian Church. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund assistant.

20. Tim and Deborah Herndon, West Lebanon, N.H. Pray that God would provide officers for Providence Presbyterian Church. / Missionary associates **Schylie La Belle** and **Angela Voskuil**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that they will have good rapport with their students. / **Mark Stumpff**, Loan Fund administrator and staff assistant.

21. Eric and Dianna Tuininga, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for students and instructors at Knox Theological College. / **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio Reformed Church, San Antonio, Tex. Pray for God's blessing upon those who recently completed a communicant's class. / Thank the Lord for the work of **Jim Scott**, who is retiring after nearly twenty-seven years of faithful service as managing editor of *New Horizons*.

22. Christopher and Ann Malamisuro, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that the Lord would give direction for the congregation's future. / **Charles and Connie Jackson**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for wisdom and grace for village church leaders. / Pray for tomorrow's meeting of the **Board of Trustees of Great Commission Publications**.

23. Pray for missionary associate **Paige Vanderwey**, Mbale, Uganda, as she assists in homeschooling the Tuininga children. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. Pray for

the members of Gospel Life Church to grow in their vision for discipleship. / **Daniel (and Victoria) Garcia**, yearlong intern at Escondido OPC in Escondido, Calif.

24. Josh and Kristen McKamy, Covenant OPC, Chambersburg, Pa. Pray that God would provide new contacts. / Pray for our retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Cal and Edie Cummings, Greet Rietkerk, and Young and Mary Lou Son**. / Pray for **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.

25. Ben and Melanie Westerveld, Quebec, Canada. Pray for outreach activities planned for the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Al Tricarico**. / Diaconal Ministries administrator **David Nakhla**. Pray for the deliberations of the Committee on Diaconal Ministries as it meets tomorrow and Friday in Willow Grove, Pa.

26. Larry and Kalynn Oldaker, Grace Fellowship OPC, Huron, Ohio. Pray that the Lord would provide new evangelistic opportunities. / Missionary associate **Janine Eygenraam**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for a bold witness as she interacts with unbelieving contacts. / *New Horizons* editorial assistant **Pat Clawson**.

27. Pray for Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Katrina Zartman**. / **Mike and Katy Myers**, Royston, Ga. Pray that the Lord would open the hearts of people to receive the gospel through the ministry of Heritage Presbyterian Church. / *New Horizons* cover designer **Chris Tobias**.

28. Bill and Sessie Welzien, Key West, Fla. Pray for the Lord to increase his kingdom in Key West and add to the membership of Keys Presbyterian Church. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**, in Haiti to assist with the training of church leaders. / *New Horizons* proofreader **Sarah Pederson**.

29. Ben and Heather Hopp, Haiti. Pray for wisdom as the Mission makes decisions regarding diaconal assistance. / **Jim and Eve Cassidy**, Austin, Tex. Pray for South Austin Presbyterian Church's outreach efforts as well as their planning for the future. / **Andrew Farr**, yearlong intern at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Ada, Mich.

30. Eric and Donna Hausler, Naples, Fla. Pray that God would provide a new location for worship for Christ the King OPC. / Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for those attending leadership training seminars being held this week. / **Zachary (and Annie) Simmons**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.

31. Heero and Anya Hacquebord, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for wisdom in finding good ways to reach adults in the community. / **David and Rebekah Graves**, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Pray that God would continue to add new members to Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church. / **Linda Foh**, OPC.org website technical assistant.

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

CHRISTOPHER DREW INSTALLED IN NORTH DAKOTA

Christopher D. Drew was installed to serve as the pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church in Grand Forks, North Dakota, on June 23. Because this is a mission work, he was installed as a pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church in Mandan, North Dakota, in order to labor in Grand Forks.

He was previously a minister in the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys of the PCUSA, but his credentials were recently received by the OPC's Presbytery of the Dakotas. Chris and his family will continue to live in Minnesota—across the Red River in East Grand Forks.

The congregation in Grand Forks was once a particularized congregation in the PCA, but it has been now been received into the OPC as a mission work under the care of the church in Mandan (which recently moved from Carson).

At the installation service, Pastor Bruce Prentice of the Mandan church preached the sermon. Pastor Jason Wallace from nearby Salt Lake City, Utah, gave the charge to the pastor, and elder Chris Campbell from Mandan gave the charge to the congregation.

MICHAEL SHINGLER INSTALLED AT SYRACUSE

Michael L. Shingler was installed on May 26 as the new pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church in Syracuse, New York. He had recently been received into the Presbytery of New York and New England from independency.

Participating in the service of installation were OP ministers Kevin Kisler (Rochester, N.Y.), Patrick Severson (Lisbon, N.Y.), Tom Trouwborst (Schenectady, N.Y.), Timothy Gregson (Amsterdam, N.Y.), and Roth Reason (Danville, Pa.), as well as OP ruling elders Jonathan Looney, Jim Graves, and David Leighton.

After the service, a time of fellowship and refreshments was held in the fellowship hall.



People at the installation of Christopher Drew in Grand Forks, N.D., including Chris, his wife Sara, and their four children (center right)



Participants in the installation of Michael Shingler from the left: Kevin Kisler, Jonathan Looney, Patrick Severson, Tom Trouwborst, Michael Shingler, Jim Graves, Timothy Gregson, Roth Reason, and David Leighton.

UPDATE

CHURCHES

- **New City Fellowship** in Grand Rapids, Mich., was organized as a separate congregation on June 17.

MINISTERS

- **Thomas G. Albaugh** was dismissed by the Presbytery of Ohio to Classis Western Canada of the URCNA on June 23, 2017; he has been installed as pastor of congregational life at Trinity Reformed Church in Lethbridge, Alberta.

- **Christopher B. Cashen**, formerly the pastor at Sovereign Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church in Hickory, N.C., was installed on July 7 as an evangelist of Redeemer OPC in Atlanta, Ga., to work part-time with refugees in Clarkston, Ga.

- **Adrian Crum** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Reformation Fellowship in Roseville, Calif., on July 28.

- **Jonathan L. Cruse** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Community Presbyterian Church in Kalamazoo, Mich., on July 15, 2017.

- **Brian Dage** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Covenant OPC in Komoka, Ontario, Canada, to serve at Emmanuel OPC, a mission work in Meaford, Ontario, on June 23.

- On June 23, **Christopher D. Drew**, formerly a PCUSA minister, was installed as a pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church in Mandan (formerly Carson), N.D., to serve at Faith Presbyterian Church, a mission work in Grand Forks, N.D.

- **Mika D. Edmondson**, formerly the organizing pastor (as associate pastor of Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich.), was installed as pastor of New City Fellowship in Grand Rapids, Mich., on June 17.

- On April 22, the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York granted permission to **Brad S. Hertzog** to demit the ministry, effective immediately.

- **James T. Hoekstra** was installed on August 26 as associate pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Hammond, Wis., to continue his work (formerly as associate pastor of Mission OPC in St. Paul, Minn.) of planting Immanuel OPC in Andover, Minn.

- On August 11, **Jason C. Kirklin**, formerly associate pastor of Grace OPC in Columbus, Ohio, was installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of the Southwest to serve at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Waco, Tex., a presbytery mission work.

- **Jeremiah W. Montgomery**, formerly the pastor of Resurrection OPC in State College, Pa., was installed on July 28 by the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania as



Participants in the ordination and installation of Jonathan Landry Cruse: (front row) Drew Cruse, Rev. Tim Bero, Charles Ybema, Rev. J. V. Fesko, Rev. Cruse, Andrew Tinker, Rev. John Ferguson, Rev. Steven Wible, Andy Taylor



Participants in the installation of Jason Kirklin: Revs. Chad Bond, Phil Hodson, Alan Story, Adam York, Joseph Keller, elder Mark Moody, Revs. Jim Cassidy, Jonathan Hutchison, Glen Clary, Jason Kirklin, Joe Troutman, elders Terry Reiningger, Jim Aust, Greg Huteson, Revs. Andrew Moody, Mark Sumpter

an evangelist to Asia under the oversight of the Committee on Foreign Missions.

- **Gregory A. Pilato**, formerly a PCA pastor, was installed as pastor of Mt. Carmel Church in Somerset, N.J., on July 1.

- **Michael L. Shingler**, formerly an independent minister, was installed as pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church in Syracuse, N.Y., on May 26.

- **Mark D. Soud** was installed as associate pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in San Jose, Calif., on July 16.

- **Wayne M. Veenstra** was ordained as a

minister and installed as associate pastor of Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich., on May 8.

IN MEMORIAM CYRIL T. NIGHTENGALE

Richard Travis

On June 7, 2017, a longtime member of Park Hill Presbyterian Church in Denver, Colorado, went to his eternal home. Cyril T. Nightengale, 89, was the last of his family to go to that eternal home. He was preceded in death by his wife, Clarice, and their sons Conrad, Grego, and



Cyril Nightengale

Claudio. He was born in Panama on September 8, 1927.

The above would be an ordinary obituary, but there is more. Cyril, his wife, and children came to the United States from Panama in the late 1950s. He was a well-educated man before he came to this country. To further his education, he went to school in Denver and worked three jobs. He eventually went to work for the FDA. One of his jobs was at the downtown Denver Woolworth store. Some of our members met him there.

Between 1962 and 1964, he and his family started to attend Park Hill Church. According to the minutes of the church, he and his family joined the church on March 9, 1965, when Rev. Elmer Dortzbach was the pastor. He was ordained and

installed as a ruling elder on April 2, 1972, when Rev. Larry Conard was the pastor. Cyril served on several committees of the Presbytery of the Dakotas and of the General Assembly.

He was a mentor to many people at Park Hill, and we celebrate his going home. He will be missed and remembered by many of us in the church.



Mike and Pamela Dengerink with Emilio and Alejandro

**SHORT-TERM MISSIONS:
BRINGING ENCOURAGEMENT
AND SUPPORT**

Pamela Dengerink

My husband, Pastor Mike Dengerink, and I have been following the work in Montevideo, Uruguay, ever since Pastor Mark Richline and his family stepped out in faith to become missionaries to Uruguay. When Mark's request for a team to come and help conduct an English Club was announced, we knew that this was for us! Five of us from Delta Oaks OPC answered God's call to go. We spent six weeks planning the English Club as well as all the travel details. None of us had ever planned an English Club before, but

by God's grace we rose to the challenge.

Montevideo is a cosmopolitan city, where atheism abounds. It was winter there, and the weather matched the spiritual darkness and apathy of the people toward God. It was really an eye-opener for me to see the hard work our missionaries have to do in that country. Despite extensive advertising, fewer than eight people came on the first day—about thirty minutes late. By the end of the week, only two had stuck with it. Were we discouraged? No!

Mike presented a gospel message about Jesus each day, and this prompted some wonderful conversations with the two men who stayed the entire week. God is moving in the life of one of the

men, Emilio, who said that "he wanted to put Jesus on the throne of his heart!" He has been attending church there ever since we left. We've remained in contact with the other man, Alejandro, and pray that the seed planted will take root.

I was so blessed to be a part of the trip to Montevideo. Bringing encouragement and support to tour dedicated, Christ-focused missionaries was truly a blessing to me. For more photos and testimonials from those who have served in OPC short-term missions, visit OPCSTM.org.



At his installation as an evangelist at Redeemer OPC in Atlanta, Ga., Christopher Cashen stands with his arm around Redeemer's pastor, Zecharias Abraham.

LETTERS

PERSECUTION: WHOSE FAULT?

Editor:

In his article on suffering, Brian De Jong discusses whether the growing secularization of Western culture will bring about persecution for American Christians. If it does, then De Jong hopes that we will learn how to respond to it from our predecessors in the Reformed faith.

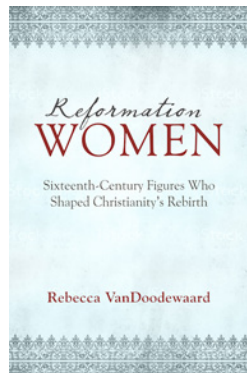
But before recalling how the Reformers handled past suffering, we need to consider how much of any coming suffering is our own fault. The apostle Peter distinguishes Christian suffering for the gospel from suffering because we have wronged others. If persecution comes our way, we need to see if it is blowback for how we have treated others, an expression of anger over what we have or have not supported, or the result of having been offended by God's Word.

Curt Day
Bethlehem, PA

REVIEWS

***Reformation Women: Sixteenth-Century Figures Who Shaped Christianity's Rebirth*, by Rebecca VanDoodewaard. Reformation Heritage Books, 2017. Paperback, 136 pages, list price \$14.00. Reviewed by OP member Victoria Van Dixhoorn.**

Between the pages of this sometimes witty and always insightful book, Rebecca VanDoodewaard has crafted a guide to a godly woman's purpose in life. *Reformation Women* is not only for Reformed women; it also serves as a helpful reminder to all Christians of God's calling and purpose for his people. VanDoodewaard makes the most of available source materials to paint a helpful picture of what it means to glorify God in every aspect of life.



Reformation Women consists of twelve chapters detailing the lives of women in the sixteenth century. These stories bring to light lesser-known figures who played significant roles in advancing the Protestant Reformation. By discussing women of all nationalities, ages, marital statuses, and social statuses, this book is directly applicable to a wide range of women. Nevertheless, it is not only a delightful collection of stories, or a well-grounded historical account, but also a book rich with Christian testimonies and tales of the Lord's faithfulness to his people.

At times, the stories of various figures can seem repetitive, since many of the women perform similar tasks and assist their communities in similar ways. These heroines are similar, but this does not make any of them less heroic. So, for those desiring to see both the Christians' strength and the Lord's active work throughout the book, it may be better to space their readings of the chapters over a longer period of time. Nonetheless, these thematic similarities can also be viewed as strengths to this book.

Another strength can be found in the framework of the book. The author not only transports us back to the high points of the Protestant Reformation in her introduction, but also propels us to the future in her wonderfully applicable conclusion. In her conclusion, VanDoodewaard draws out several important points that emerge from these narratives. All of the women unflinchingly committed themselves to their duties: they cared for the sick and needy, they wrote publicly and boldly about the Reformed faith, they stood up to persecution with courage and dignity, they faithfully educated those in their charge, and they submitted to and assisted their husbands. Most importantly, each woman possessed a vital, spiritual strength.

In our day, when service and sacrifice are often lacking, stories like the ones VanDoodewaard tells could simply make us feel guilty. Reformation in these areas is important today, but this book is really a spur to spiritual growth

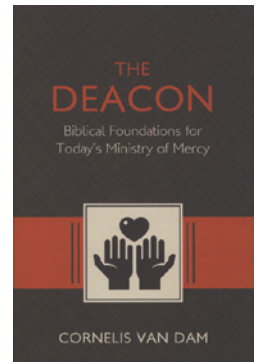
and encouragement—which we will only find in the Lord. *Reformation Women* does not attribute these women's accomplishments to their own efforts; rather, the reality of the Lord's provision and strength is intricately woven throughout the book. Rebecca VanDoodewaard has crafted an inspiring read; I recommend it to any Christian seeking a fuller understanding of their faith, the church, and God's purpose for their lives.

***The Deacon: Biblical Foundations for Today's Ministry of Mercy*, by Cornelis Van Dam. Reformation Heritage Books, 2016. Paperback, 256 pages, list price \$18.00. Reviewed by OP minister Lendall H. Smith.**

Here is a well-written, biblical, historical, and practical study of the office of deacon from a Reformed perspective. It is a very helpful book for deacons in understanding their office and carrying out a ministry of mercy.

The Old Testament serves as a foundation for a ministry of mercy for the people of God. The whole nation was to care for the poor. The rationale for providing for the poor and needy was their reception of divine love and their delivery from bondage and oppression. The joy of deliverance was to be shared by all, so that "no affliction or want was to bind or hinder them any way in their service to God in the fullness of life."

The ministry of Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. Christ came as a servant and gave his life as the ultimate act of love to deliver his people from their sins. His teaching is saturated with what it means to love one's neighbor and to help the poor and needy. The outpouring of the Spirit by the risen Christ on the community of his followers was manifested by their taking "care of each other in loving service for the joy and freedom of the children of God. No



500th Anniversary Mini-Conference

October 14 • Middletown, Del.

- Conference Title: Martin Luther: Beyond Faith Alone
- Speaker: Bill Dennison
- 9 to noon on Saturday; freewill offering
- Children's program
- Host: Grace Presbyterian Church, 13 Pennington St, Middletown, DE 19709
- RSVP by October 8 to Abby at isamuel25@msn.com
- www.gracemiddletownde.com

poverty or affliction must bind anyone and take that happiness away." The apostolic appointment of seven men to serve tables in Acts 6 is understood as establishing deacons in their ministry. The attention given to their ordination and service was appropriate for this new position in the church and the division of labor in its ministries of word and deed.

The biblical requirements for deacons express a high view of their office. While affirming that Scripture restricts the office to men, the author notes that the description of Phoebe and the enrollment of widows indicate that women had special tasks in the church. An entire chapter is dedicated to women and the diaconate in the history of the church. This reviewer appreciated the chapter on the role of the diaconate in church history and how the Reformation restored it "more closely to the biblical norms."

The final section of the book focuses on the functioning of the diaconate in the church today. There is sage analysis and advice here that deals with a variety of diaconal needs. Several key principles are given to guide the deacons in their ministry, both within the congregation and to those outside the congregation, as they have opportunity and ability to do so in conjunction with the gospel. He qualifies this help by saying that it is not the role

of deacons "by getting involved in social and political activism to relieve the needs of the poor." The book concludes by reminding us of the blessing of the poor and the joy that is given to the deacons "of giving not only material help but also the good news of salvation as an encouragement."

No Little Women, by Aimee Byrd. P&R Publishing, 2016. Paperback, 288 pages, list price \$14.99. Reviewed by OP member Elizabeth Holmlund.

In *No Little Women: Equipping All Women in the Household of God*, Aimee Byrd makes the case that women in the church need to diligently apply themselves to becoming competent students of God's word and doctrine, exercise discernment in their reading of popular Christian books marketed to women, and recognize the danger of distinguishing women's "ministries" from the church's primary ministry of word and sacrament. In addition, Byrd addresses pastors and elders directly, urging them to be more purposeful in how they equip women under their spiritual oversight



toward this end.

Byrd's main points are ones with which few in our denomination would disagree, yet they certainly bear repeating. Yes, women, no less than men, need to be moving from a milk-heavy diet to a meat-heavy diet in order to grow in knowledge and holiness. In this regard, Byrd presents practical tips like how to prepare to engage with the preaching of God's word on Sunday and strategies for reading books with

Positions Available

Ministerial Care Administrator: The newly formed Committee on Ministerial Care is seeking an ordained officer to serve as its part-time administrator (about 15 hours per week). Duties will include serving as the key point of contact for ministers regarding their retirement needs. Some travel may be required. Send inquiries to Greg De Jong at gkdejong@comcast.net.

Pastor: We are seeking a full-time pastor who believes in expository preaching and is committed to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the other OPC standards. Our church is in Rio Rancho, N.M., a city of 85,000 just outside the city of Albuquerque. We are a small but stable congregation of 63 members, with over 70 worshippers in regular attendance. Our session consists of three experienced and committed elders who work alongside the pastor in caring for the spiritual and physical well-being of the church. Our website is rropc.org and anyone interested can email Michael Kolysko at mjkolysko@q.com.

Director of Congregational Life Ministries: New Hope Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Green Bay, Wis., seeks a director of congregational life ministries to administer outreach and enfolding opportunities within the congregation and community. We seek a Christian man with interpersonal and ministry skills to engage others in congregational life and lead others in doing so in support of our mission. Visit <http://www.nhopc.org/ministries/job-opportunities/> for links to a detailed description and application materials, or call 920-468-8565 with questions.

care. She suggests that churches should offer regular classes for women—sometimes taught by women—on theological topics like the doctrine of Scripture, the doctrines of grace, and the attributes of God as they relate to everyday struggles. Byrd also correctly points out that there is a great deal of biblically and doctrinally unsound literature currently being published for Christian women. And not just women, but also church officers, need to be careful to prevent false teaching, disguised in a flowery book jacket, from taking hold in the church—and they need to address it, if it does. Finally, Byrd hits the nail on the head when she exhorts pastors and elders to befriend the women in their congregation, rather than remaining aloof in the name of propriety. Investing in friendships with the women of the church is a two-way blessing: women will be better cared for as their spiritual needs are better understood, and pastors and elders will be blessed as they listen to and learn from their church's women.

Still, fuzzy exegetical work raises concern. For example, Byrd repeatedly uses the phrase “necessary ally”—an alternative translation of the Genesis 2:18 phrase *ezer kenegdo*, traditionally rendered as “suitable helper” or “helpmeet”—to describe the role of women as they relate to the church. This is concerning because (1) the Hebrew lexeme *ngd* (“suitable” or “opposite of”) does not include the idea of necessity within its morphological range, and (2) the context of Genesis 2:18 is particularly the relationship between husband and wife, not women and men in the church. Byrd seems very comfortable referring to women as the “necessary allies” of men in the church, but would she be

equally comfortable if a pastor, or indeed any male believer, were to refer to the women in the congregation as his “help-meets”? In addition, one wishes that Byrd would have shown more restraint, both in the number of practices over which she quibbles (for the sake of readability) and in the spirit with which she critiques other Christian authors.

These concerns aside, if one exercises a little of the discernment that Byrd so heartily urges, this book can be a useful resource for encouraging and equipping women in the church.

ELIZABETH ANDREWS TURNS 100

Linda Posthuma

When someone turns one hundred years old, it's time to celebrate! And the OP residents at Quarryville Presbyterian Retirement Community in Quarryville, Pennsylvania, did just that—gathering on July 13 to honor retired missionary Elizabeth Andrews at a special birthday dinner. Betty, whose birthday is June 29, served

Hurricane Harvey Relief

Donate toward OPC relief efforts at:
www.opc.org/committee_dm.html.

as an OP missionary in Taiwan with her husband Egbert for twenty-three years. She has lived at Quarryville since 1991.

Twenty-six friends from Quarryville and beyond enjoyed a special meal and a short program, emceed by OP minister and retired QPRC chaplain Stephen Phillips. Representing the Committee on Foreign Missions, associate general secretary Douglas Clawson brought greetings from the Committee. He also read a letter from Committee president Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., which concluded: “We praise God with you that you can continue today to confess, ‘Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.’”



At Betty Andrews' 100th birthday party (from the left): Ruthann Reppert, Linda Posthuma, Betty, Mary and Bob Eckardt, Steve and Jeanne Phillips